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EDITOR'S NOTE

It's a brand new year! That would also mean, a brand new YOU!

This New Year, we've decided to kick start our first issue for the year by focusing on you. We believe that this is one of the best ways to start the year because discovering and understanding yourself better will no doubt help in shaping you to be a better version of yourself.

We often start the New Year writing a list resolutions you would like to achieve and for many, the focus to achieve these resolutions is often lost as the months pass by. There can be many reasons to this but we find what's most important is that these resolutions stay true to your heart and it's only then that you'll have the will to persevere and achieve your goals.

Therefore, by loving and discovering yourself as well as setting realistic resolutions that are close to your heart, it is more likely for you to follow through with them. With that being said, we're giving you a head start with our feature stories for the month that focuses on loving and discovering yourself!

Now, if you're a seasoned 1Twenty80 reader, you'll know that that's not all. We've a variety of topics that will help with improving your health and well-being. If you're new, not to worry, health is a timeless topic and all you'll need to do is to flip through the pages and discover all that we have for you this month!

I shall leave you to that and lastly, on behalf of the 1Tweny80 team, I would like to wish you an amazing 2023! May this new year bring you good health and joy!

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Oil pulling

It's surely not like pulling teeth

By Isabel Andrew

Oily food is bad for health, whilst oil is good for oral care. How confusing is this notion? One of the many latest trends to resurrect from ancient archives has to do with giving your mouth a quick oil bath. It's called oil pulling and it dates back to centuries-old Ayurvedic medicine.

Kavala, now referred to as oil pulling, is an oral cleansing technique where a comfortable amount of oil is held in the mouth and gargled. *Gundusha* involves completely filling the mouth with oil and holding it, rather than swishing or gargling.

HOW DOES IT HELP?

Oral cleanliness is one less worry with oil pulling. Here are some of its benefits:

- Kills harmful bacteria.
- Reduces plaque formation.
- May help prevent tooth decay.
- Improves bad breath.
- Promotes gum health.
- Strengthens oral muscles.
- Whitens the teeth.

Ayurvedic practitioners believe that oil pulling:

- Enhances the senses.
- Brings about a feeling of freshness.
- Maintains clarity in the voice.
- Clears sinuses.
- Reduces headaches.
- Reduces inflammation in the body that's linked to illnesses like arthritis and heart disease.
- Excretes heavy toxic metals by activating the salivary enzymes and detoxifies the body.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The steps are simple:

1. Take a tablespoon of oil into your mouth. Use high-quality, edible oils like sunflower oil, coconut oil, and sesame oil.
2. Swish it inside your mouth until it turns frothy and white. Start with two minutes and gradually move your way up to five to 20 minutes.
3. Spit the oil into a trash can or some tissue. Don't spit it into the sink or toilet as this can cause buildup and lead to clogging.
4. Brush your teeth with toothpaste as usual to remove excess oil.
5. Rinse your mouth well using water before eating or drinking anything.
6. Repeat a few times per week or up to three times daily. It's recommended to do this in the morning on an empty stomach.

Sources: Healthline, Verywell Health, Medical News Today, National Library of Medicine, WebMD

You, Me and Self-gaslighting

Self-gaslighting is injurious to health

By Yasanthi Devi

Many people gaslight themselves unknowingly. Have you ever told yourself that you're acting too strongly in the face of something that actually bothered you or hurt your feelings?

Disregarding your own feelings and invalidating them becomes a problem because you don't pause to understand the reason behind your initial reaction. Essentially you're jumping from point A to C without acknowledging Point B.

In the long run, this kind of repeated behaviour can manifest negatively in various aspects of your life. Constant self-gaslighting can cause you to question everything about yourself.

Why does self-gaslighting happen?

Some psychologists think that other types of gaslighting, such as gaslighting by a spouse or romantic partner, and gaslighting by a parent, may develop into self-gaslighting. In other words, self-gaslighting is when we continue where the previous gas-lighter left off. The only difference is that we now gaslight ourselves.

Self-gaslighting can happen when we internalise abuse from external sources and try to make sense out of things using a distorted lens. Common phrases we often use when self-gaslighting can sound something like:

"Maybe it wasn't that bad."
"Maybe I'm just overreacting or overthinking this."
"I'm sure that's not what he/she meant by that."

SOME PSYCHOLOGISTS THINK THAT OTHER TYPES OF GASLIGHTING, SUCH AS GASLIGHTING BY A SPOUSE OR ROMANTIC PARTNER, AND GASLIGHTING BY A PARENT, MAY DEVELOP INTO SELF-GASLIGHTING.

Signs of self-gaslighting

Signs of self-gaslighting can look something like (but not limited to):

» Making excuses toward others' negative behaviour

Have you ever experienced someone acting badly towards you and thought, "Maybe she's just having a bad day" or "Maybe I'm just overthinking this"?

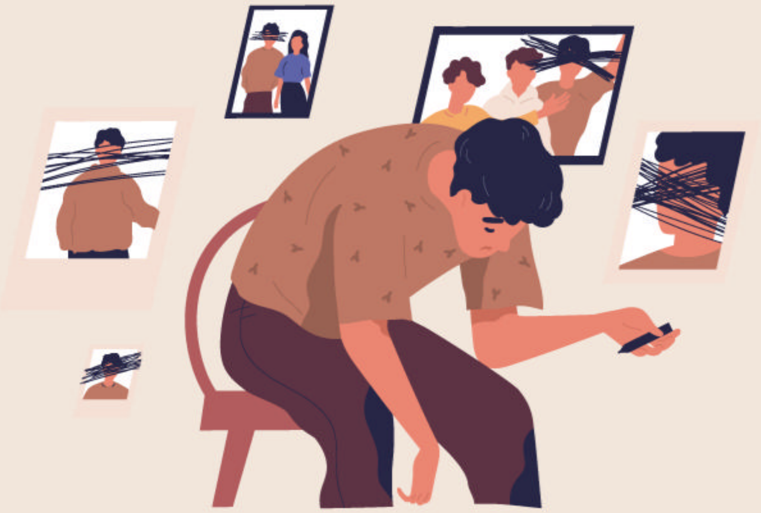
Another indication of self gas-lighting is the persistent need to rationalise and justify the inappropriate bad behaviour, derogatory remarks, or abuse of others.

» Invalidating your feelings

Using excuses like "Maybe I'm too sensitive" or "Maybe I'm overreacting to this" to brush off your hurt feelings or emotional turmoil over something that clearly caused those feelings in the first place can also lead to gaslighting yourself.

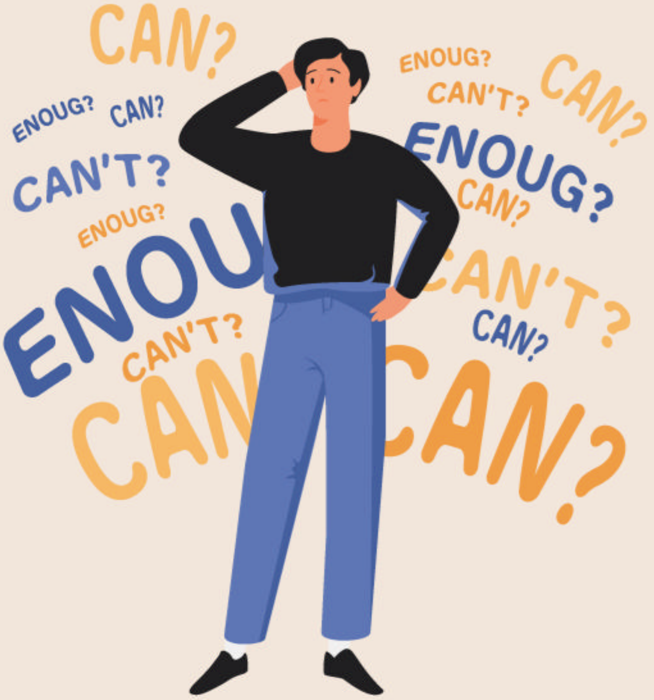
Ruminating about your past

By repeatedly reliving past events or situations while also reflecting on how you should have reacted or what you might have done differently, you can gaslight yourself. Self-blame and rumination can result from the belief that you could have acted differently to make things better and the need to mentally run through various scenarios of how you might have acted differently.



Constantly second-guessing yourself

One downfall of self-gaslighting is that it makes you feel like you can't trust your own decisions. You constantly go over your decision and think of various other ways in which you can avoid or ignore the problem. Continuous self-doubt breeds uncertainty, which can affect how confident you are in your choices.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> THE OLD SAYING 'WE ARE OUR OWN WORST CRITICS' IS PARTICULARLY ACCURATE FOR PEOPLE WHO SELF-GASLIGHT.

Questioning your memory to a point of distortion

People who have experienced abuse experience this frequently. In some cases, when a victim recalls their abuse, those around them are quick to steer clear of the topic or insist that the abuse in question never occurred. When this happens, you start thinking perhaps you're imagining things and the abuse didn't happen.

If this keeps happening, you'll eventually start to doubt other memories or events in your life. In the end, this might plunge you into a mental black hole where you start to doubt your perception of reality.

A highly critical inner voice

The old saying 'we are our own worst critics' is particularly accurate for people who self-gaslight. You interpret any imperfection in your performance as evidence of your incapacity. You beat yourself up if you fail a test. You believe the worst of yourself and conclude that you're unlovable because of one bad relationship. Everything you say and do must be flawless, otherwise, you'lll perceive it as a failure. It's important to remember that nobody is perfect and mistakes are a part of life. We live and we learn.

Self-blaming for things that are often out of your control

When other people treat you poorly, you start to believe that it is all your fault. You always manage to place the blame on yourself even when it may not be your fault in the first place. With self blame, you may also be highly critical of yourself and judge yourself harshly.

Break free from the vicious grasps of self-gaslighting

Get a blank canvas (such as paper or journal) and write down whatever that crosses your mind

It can be singular words or your feelings. Write them down and try your best not to over analyse whatever you're writing. Do also try your level best not to insert any form of judgement or try to give meaning to whatever that you're penning on the paper.

Breathe

Remind yourself to take a moment to breathe when your mind is trying to make sense of everything. Spend a few seconds refocusing and feeling the ground beneath you. Try to concentrate on what is going on right now by tuning in to your surroundings and your senses. This could be the distant sound of birds chirping or the noise of a busy city. Stay attuned to whatever that's happening in the present.

Practise asking yourself these questions

When in face of turmoil and on the cusp of self-doubt, asking yourself these questions may be helpful.

- What's really going on? / What truly took place?
- What is the problem?
- What is making me feel this way? / Why am I feeling this way?

> REMIND YOURSELF TO TAKE A MOMENT TO BREATHE WHEN YOUR MIND IS TRYING TO MAKE SENSE OF EVERYTHING. SPEND A FEW SECONDS REFOCUSING AND FEELING THE GROUND BENEATH YOU.

Practice self-compassion and self-love

Don't dwell on mistakes and "what ifs" for too long. Do your best to avoid criticising yourself for things you feel you could have done better. Accept yourself for who you are, flaws and all. Learn to observe your thoughts without judgement. At the beginning, it may be difficult to break away from the cycle of self gaslighting. However, it gets easier with practice.

Speak to a therapist or a mental health professional

Please consult a mental health professional if you believe your mind is distorted and find it difficult to distinguish between the truth and gaslight-produced fiction. These experts are adept at guiding you through your thoughts with useful mental exercises. Speaking with a mental health professional who isn't involved in your personal events or your life in general also gives you the chance to view things from a clearer, more detached perspective.

Gaslighting yourself carries equal weight and consequences as being gaslighted by someone else. It can leave deep scars however it's also worthy to note that these scars are far from being permanent.

In the long run, self awareness is the key that helps with level headedness, silencing the negative voices in your head and gives you the power to decide on how you react to things around you. Please remember that you matter, your feelings are valid and we see you.

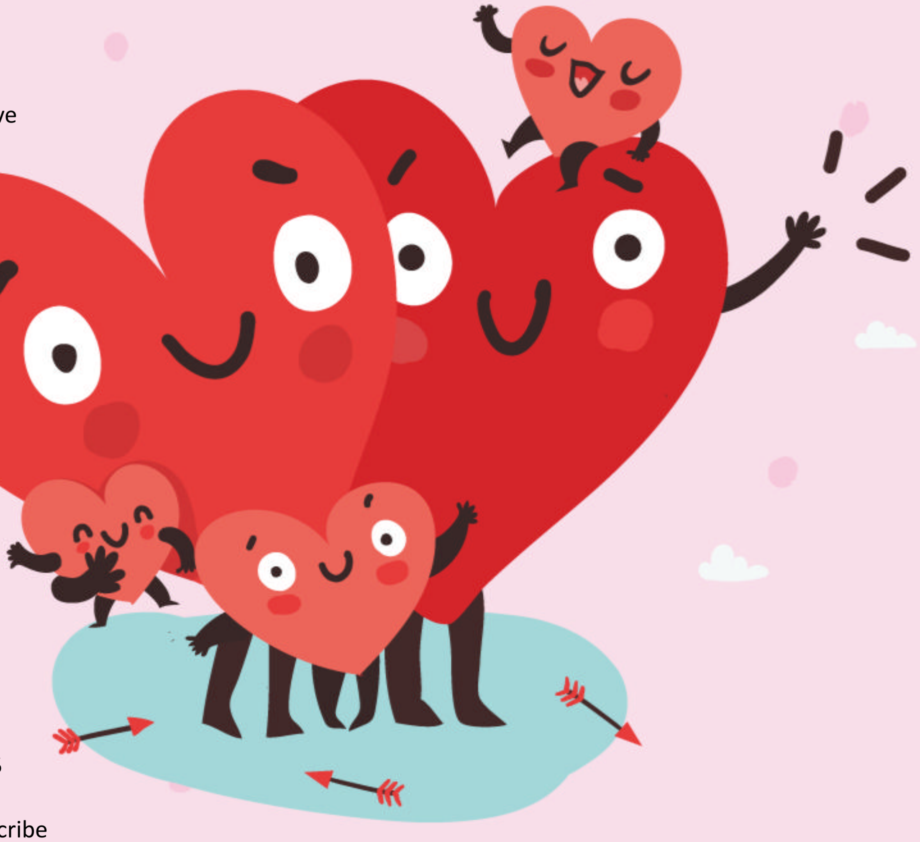
Please do not hesitate to reach out for help if you or a loved one are suffering from anxiety, depression, anger issues or other mental health conditions. You may call Talian Kasih at 15999, Befrienders at 03-795 68145 or the emergency hotline 999. ■

Source: Healthline, Psychology Today, Happier Human, Well + Good

Love Languages & You

What is your love language?

By Yasanthi Devi



The five love languages outline five ways that partners can show and receive affection. These include receiving gifts, spending time with loved ones, being touched physically, and speaking encouraging words.

Yet the love languages aren't just for romantic relationships! You can express your appreciation for coworkers, friends, and partners in love by using the five love languages.

The Conception of 5 Love Languages

In 1992, Dr. Gary Chapman published The 5 Love Languages. He created the term "love languages" in the now-famous work to describe the fundamentally various ways we express and receive love.

Gary Chapman is an author, radio host and a marriage counsellor. Prior to penning the book, Chapman noticed trends in the couples he was counselling. He understood that the couples weren't communicating their needs to one another.

This had prompted him to identify the “Five Love Languages” to better help people understand the ways love is expressed.

THE LOVE LANGUAGES AREN'T JUST FOR ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS! YOU CAN EXPRESS YOUR APPRECIATION FOR COWORKERS, FRIENDS, AND PARTNERS IN LOVE BY USING THE FIVE LOVE LANGUAGES.

What are the 5 love languages?

It is thought that people usually have two love languages: one main love language and one secondary love language.

The way in which one feels most loved is through their first language. The way that one feels loved, albeit not as much as in their primary language, is through their secondary language.

#1

Words of affirmation

The concept of "words of affirmation" refers to the verbal expression of love, admiration, or praise. When this is a person's dominant love language, they value positive affirmations, uplifting quotes, romantic notes, and more. Something as meaningful as giving them praise or highlighting their strengths, can brighten up their day. .

People who need affirmation thrive when they frequently hear from the people they love, and in order to truly feel loved, they want to hear what the other person is thinking aloud.

#2

Physical touch

Physical touch can be in the form of a hug, a cuddle, an intimate touch, or even just a kind hand on someone's shoulder.

People who require physical contact want to be hugged, to cuddle, and to always engage in displays of affection in order to feel loved and to show their love for those who matter to them.

#3 Quality time

Spending time together while enjoying one another's company is what is meant by "quality time."

People who are in need of quality time long for private moments to reconnect with their loved ones and catch up. These private moments allow for conversation and closeness.

#4 Acts of service

When someone does something for another, it counts as an act of love. This can include cooking, cleaning, driving, or even running errands. The other person experiences love or demonstrates love by performing that act of service.

When someone needs a favour or has errands to run, they may ask their loved ones for assistance—not because it is simpler, but because they need the other person to acknowledge their love for them.

#5 Gifts

Gift-giving is a sign of love and affection for someone who expresses themselves and receives messages in this love language. They value the gift itself as well as the time and effort the giver invested in putting said gift together.

It's not necessary to give big or lavish gifts in order to express love. It could be leaving a pastry, a note, a handmade gift or even some flowers. These modest presents are expressions of love from the giverto the recipient.

Curious to find out your love language?

Try out this simple quiz.

1. WHICH MEANS MORE TO YOU?

A. Receiving a loving text, note, or email from a loved one without any particular reason.
B. Being hugged by a loved one.
C. Spending one-on-one time with someone I love.
D. Someone I love does something helpful for me.
E. Receiving a token or a heartfelt gift from someone I love.

2. WHICH OF THESE APPEAL TO YOU?

A. Hearing the words "I appreciate you" from someone you love.
B. I feel at ease holding hands, high-fiving, or encircling someone I love with my arm.
C. Even if we aren't really doing anything, I am with someone I love.
D. Someone I care about does something unexpectedly for me to assist with a project.
E. Someone I care about gives me a gift unexpectedly

3. WHICH OF THESE MAKE YOU HAPPY?

A. Having a loved one tell me that they love me.
B. Sitting next to a loved one.
C. Spending time with a loved one.
D. Someone goes above and beyond to take care of something that releases pressure from you.
E. Receiving small gifts that a loved one put together for you.

4. WHICH OF THESE DO YOU DEEPLY RESONATE WITH?

A. When a loved one says “I’m proud of you”.
B. Giving hugs to someone you love.
C. Doing an activity together with someone you love.
D. Receiving help from a loved one to complete a task.
E. Receiving nice things from someone you love makes you feel appreciated.

5. WHICH ONE STANDS OUT TO YOU THE MOST?

A. Hearing praises from someone you love.
B. Getting a back massage from someone you love.
C. Being comfortable enough to just hang out with your loved one without doing any activity or having any plans.
D. A loved one participating in an activity they don't particularly enjoy but does it for you.
E. Someone you care about presents you with something that made them think of you.

6. WHICH ONE SPEAKS CLOSER TO YOUR HEART?

A. Receiving compliments about your appearance from a loved one.
B. Being in close proximity to a loved one.
C. A loved one showing interest in the things you care about.
D. When a loved one goes out of their way to help you out.
E. Receiving exciting gifts from a loved one.

7. WHICH OF THESE ARE YOU DRAWN TO?

A. Receiving compliments from a loved one unexpectedly.
B. Sharing meaningful touches with a loved one in public.
C. When a loved one takes time to sit, listen and understand your thoughts and feelings.
D. When a loved one offers to run errands for you.
E. Receiving a thoughtful gift from someone you love.

Results

If you answered mostly A-s, your primary love language is Words of Affirmation.

Words of wisdom, counsel, and encouragement from a loved one have meaning for you. You gain the courage and assurance you require through words. You can tell how much someone you care about loves you by their verbal expressions.

If you answered mostly B-s, your primary love language is Physical Touch.

You constantly yearn to be near the people you love, showing your affection for them through hugs, massages, or even sitting side by side (sometimes squeezing into the same seat).

If you answered mostly C-s, your primary love language is Quality Time.

Spending time and taking pleasure in the company of a loved one gives you a great deal of satisfaction. When you spend time with a loved one, you might occasionally yearn for deep conversations and to make memories. Sometimes being with the person you love will make you feel the happiest.

If you answered mostly D-s, your primary love language is Acts of Service.

You believe that action speak louder than words. You appreciate people who help you out to alleviate stress or do things to make your life easier. You may take promises seriously and feel disappointed if a loved one does not follow through on their promise.

If you answered mostly E-s, your primary love language is Gifts.

If giving gifts is your preferred method of expressing your affection for someone, then you are also likely to give gifts to others. You put a lot of thought into choosing a gift for a loved one, and you value it when they do the same for you.

In all relationships, not just romantic ones, communication is frequently the biggest obstacle. Understanding your love language will help you better show your loved ones your affection as well as learn how you like to be loved so you can foster more open and healthier relationships.

NOTE: This test is not intended for use in any kind of self-diagnosis. If you would like to learn more about yourself and how you approach interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships, you’re strongly advised to speak with a relationship expert or other relevant professionals to gain better insights. ■

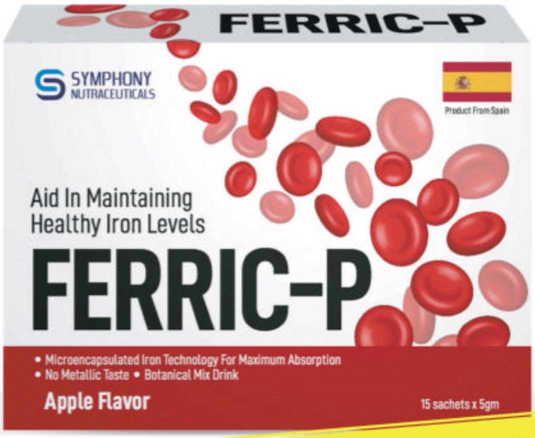
Source: The Five Love Languages by Gary Chapman, The Love Language Official Website, Science of People, Huffington Post

BOTHERED BY THE
SIDE-EFFECTS OF IRON TABLET?

"Looking for something that is more acceptable and tasty?"

Side-Effects of Traditional Iron

- Constipation
- Nausea
- Heartburn
- Metallic taste
- Black Stools
- Stomach pain and irritation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Ferrous Fumarate - Uses, Side Effects and More (2022). WebMD. https://www.webmd.com/drugs/2/drug-4129/ferrous-fumarate-oral/details
Synder, C. (2021 January 5). Ferrous Sulfate: Benefits, Uses, Side Effects, and More Healthline. https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/ferrous-sulfate#bottom-line

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SYMPHONY NUTRACEUTICALS

What to expect:

The Dental Milestone

Good oral health starts from the moment a child's first tooth erupts

By Dr Nik Fatihah (DDS, UKM), Global Dental Mont Kiara

Every parent would be so eager to tick off a child's milestone list; first roll over, first word, first solid, first step, first day of school. A child's smile is also an important milestone in their life and it's as important for parents to ensure that they are on the right track.

Beginning stage:
Infant

Age 3 months:
Signs of teething

Age 6 months:
First 'baby' tooth

Age 1:
First dental visit

Age 3:
Complete set of primary teeth

Age 6:
First permanent tooth – molars

Age 7:
Loss of first baby tooth

Age 9:
Early orthodontic assessment

Age 13:
Complete set of permanent teeth

Age 14:
Fixed braces treatment

Age 17:
Wisdom teeth

Final stage:
Adult

TEETHING

What is it?

It is when the first tooth comes through the gums.

When?

Usually between 6 months to a year but can be as early as 3 months.

Problem?

You will notice the little one to drool more, have trouble sleeping and likes to bite, chew or put objects or fingers in the mouth. Your child might also be fussier and crankier due to the discomfort and some may develop an increase in temperature.

What to do?

Giving your child a cold teething toy or massage the gums with clean fingers; the pressure might help soothe the aching gum.

Once the first tooth appears, use an infant-sized toothbrush with a smear of a children's toothpaste to keep teeth cavity free and mouth healthy.

The American Dental Association and the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommend scheduling a child's first dental visit at or near his or her first birthday

INCREASED RISK OF CARIES AS THE CHEWING SURFACES ON BACK TEETH ARE MORE LIKELY TO TRAP FOOD AND BACTERIA COMPARED TO OTHER TOOTH WITH SMOOTH SURFACES.

COMPLETE SET OF PRIMARY TEETH

➲ What is it?

When all 20 baby teeth have fully erupted in the mouth.

➲ When?

By the age of 3.

➲ Problem?

- The last baby tooth to cut through the gums are the molars and these can be quite painful for the child. A child may resort to thumb-sucking as a way to relieve discomfort.
- At this stage, early childhood caries may be apparent if the child takes a bottle to sleep.

➲ What to do?

- Managing teething pain by applying pressure on the gums with a clean finger or giving the child a cold teething toy.
- Prevent caries by adopting healthy oral hygiene habits; brushing twice daily with fluoridated children toothpaste and keep sippy cups or bottles out of the mouth at naptime.

FIRST PERMANENT TOOTH

➲ What is it?

The first adult tooth to appear in the mouth are the first molars. It erupts behind the last primary molars without replacing any of the primary teeth.

➲ When?

Typically erupts at the age of 6.

➲ Problem?

- Pain is common as the molar cuts through the gums.
- Increased risk of caries as the chewing surfaces on back teeth are more likely to trap food and bacteria compared to other tooth with smooth surfaces.

➲ What to do?

Fissure sealants are often advised for newly erupted first molars to prevent and protect these teeth from caries.

Fissure Sealant

A sealant is a protective plastic coating, which is applied to the biting surfaces of the back teeth.

The sealant forms a hard shield that keeps food and bacteria from getting into the tiny grooves in the teeth and causing decay.

LOSING BABY TEETH

What is it?

When the baby teeth becomes loose and comes out naturally or due to an impact or caries.

When?

A baby tooth is replaced with a permanent adult tooth at the age of 6-7 years, in the same order as they erupt in the mouth. This means the first baby tooth to be replaced is usually the lower center teeth.

Problem?

- Overlapping permanent and retained primary teeth.
- Losing a tooth during contact sports/ fall.

What to do?

- Regular dental visit would enable early detection of any dental issues. Your dentist would advise if a retained baby tooth needs to be taken out to allow the permanent tooth to grow.
- The use of mouth guards during contact sports would help prevent dental injury. It helps cushion a blow to the face, minimizing the risk of broken teeth and injuries to the lips, tongue, face or jaw.

COMPLETE SET OF PERMANENT TEETH

What is it?

It is when all 28 permanent teeth, excluding wisdom teeth, have erupt in the mouth.

When?

Usually around 13-15 years of age. Wisdom teeth usually erupt between 17 and 25 years of age. They can, however, erupt many years later.

Problem?

- Pain during eruption of the tooth as it cuts through the gum.
- Overcrowding, overbite, underbite of the permanent teeth.
- Spacing in between teeth due to missing permanent teeth.

What to do?

- Regular dental visit is important. During examination, the dentist are able to point out any dental related problems early.
- Early orthodontic evaluation can be done at around 9 years of age to recognize alignment issues and in certain cases, early correction can be done.

Prevention is better than cure. See your dentist every 6 months or at least once a year to maintain good oral health and dental problem free. ■

MUMMY THUMB

No, it's not another funny name for a mother's thumb

By Isabel Andrew

Calling all new mummies, daddies and caregivers! Does your thumb ache? Does your painful thumb limit your wrist movements and grasping strength? Well, actually this pain doesn't just affect parents with babies. But people of different ages who heavily rely on the power of their thumbs.

WHAT IS MUMMY THUMB?

As it's most often seen in those aged 30 to 50 years old and women three times more than men, this pain is called 'mummy thumb'.

Mummy thumb is sometimes also called:

- Baby wrist.
- Cradle thumb.
- New mother's disease.
- Wrist tendonitis.
- De Quervain's tenosynovitis (or de Quervain's tendonitis, syndrome, or disease).

Mummy thumb often appears in new parents because they regularly need to lift their babies for feeding and diaper changes. Essentially, the tendons that stretch from the thumb to the wrist are overused and inflamed. They rub against the 'tunnel' that encloses them and that triggers discomfort, pain and swelling on the base of the thumb or near the wrist.

WHAT DOES MUMMY THUMB FEEL LIKE?

Mummy thumb is a sharp or dull pain at the base of the thumb or at the thumb side of the wrist. Here’s a checklist of its symptoms:

- Sharp or dull pain extending from the wrist to the thumb.
- Difficult to grab, hold, or pinch things.
- Stiff or tender thumb.
- Swollen wrist or thumb.
- A little bump or nodule formed at the base of the thumb.
- Thumb makes a snapping or ‘locking’ sound.
- New mothers typically experience symptoms between four to six weeks after giving birth.

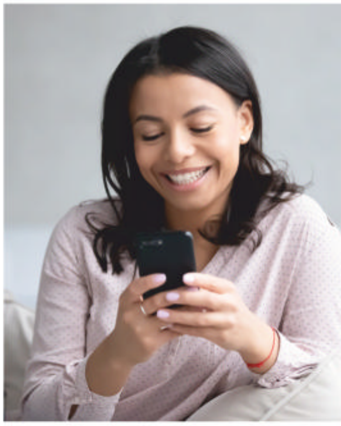
> THE EXACT CAUSES OF MUMMY THUMB ARE YET TO BE DETERMINED. HOWEVER, DOCTORS SAY IT'S LIKELY DUE TO REPETITIVE HAND MOVEMENTS INVOLVING THE THUMB OR WRIST.

WHAT TRIGGERS MUMMY THUMB?

The exact causes of mummy thumb are yet to be determined. However, doctors say it's likely due to repetitive hand movements involving the thumb or wrist.

Such hand movements could be the result of:

- Knitting.
- Using tools.
- Carrying heavy bags.
- Scrolling, texting or using a smartphone for extended periods.
- Typing.
- Carrying a baby for a long time in certain positions.



Other possible causes of mother’s thumb include:

- Hormonal changes during pregnancy.
- Wrist strain or injury.
- Rheumatoid arthritis.

When you overuse or flex your thumbs too much, tiny tears can occur inside or around the tendon. This phenomenon is called a repetitive strain injury (RSI). Statistically, middle-aged females are more prone to mummy thumb, especially after pregnancy.

WHAT ARE THE SOLUTIONS FOR MUMMY THUMB?

Mummy thumb is almost inevitable. Nevertheless, it's only temporary and will heal on its own. Though, as the saying goes, prevention is better than cure. So, here are some solutions to avoiding and managing mummy thumb:

ACTIVITY MODIFICATION

- Avoid using your thumb, wrist, and hand as much as possible by switching your hands once in a while.
- Change the way you carry your baby such as baby wearing, using strollers, using a sling or pillow when nursing or simply using your palms to scoop up your baby’s head and lower back.
- Regularly relax and stretch your hand and wrist throughout the day.

HOME REMEDIES

- Doing a contrast bath by giving heat therapy to your hand with a heating pad or warm water and then switching to cold therapy with cold water or an ice pack. This temperature change is said to constrict and dilate the blood vessels. Thus, increasing blood and oxygen circulation into tissues.

- Exercises:

Thumb lift

1. Place your hand on a flat surface, palm up.
2. Lift and curl your thumb over your palm to make a “C” shape.
3. Hold for about 6 seconds.
4. Repeat up to 12 times.

Passive thumb flexion

1. Hold your hand in front of you like you’re about to shake someone’s hand.
2. Use your other hand to bend your thumb down at the place where your palm meets your thumb.
3. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds.
4. Repeat up to 4 times.

Finkelstein stretch

1. Hold both arms out in front of you, palms up.
2. Bend your affected thumb toward your palm.
3. Use your other hand to gently stretch your thumb and wrist toward your forearm until you feel the stretch on the thumb side of your wrist.
4. Hold for at least 15 seconds and repeat up to 4 times.

MEDICATION

- Over-the-counter anti-inflammatory medications can aid in relieving pain. However, it's vital to consult your doctor if you're breastfeeding.

SPLINT

- Ask your doctor for a splint or brace for your fingers. The thick fabric and light plastic with adjustable straps will prevent your fingers from exertion.

INJECTION

- If the pain persists, make an appointment with a specialist. A cortisone (steroid) shot maybe the next step. But not to worry as it is safe for nursing mothers.

> TO RECAP, MUMMY THUMB IS A BRIEF YET EXASPERATING PAIN AROUND THE THUMB AND WRIST AREA THAT COULD LIMIT DAILY HAND MOVEMENTS.

SURGERY

- In extremely rare cases, a tendon release surgery can be a permanent fix. The procedure involves reducing pressure on the tendon by making an incision and relieving the swollen tendon.

Home remedies should improve pain within two to four weeks. Nevertheless, talking to a doctor can provide you with a steady diagnosis.

To recap, mummy thumb is a brief yet exasperating pain around the thumb and wrist area that could limit daily hand movements. Unfortunately, its primary victims are mothers during and after pregnancy and also caregivers of babies. Fortunately, there are many ways to avoid and overcome the pain. Mummy thumb is not normal and it must be dealt with. Take care, dear mummies! ■

Sources: Healthline, Medical News Today, Mychiro Malaysia, Gleneagles Malaysia

HEALTHY OR UNHEALTHY?

A deep dive on everyday food and beverages

By Yasanthi Devi

Identifying foods that are healthy for you and those that are not can be challenging. Things become all the more difficult when there are many falsely labelled 'healthy' foods that are readily available which can be both deceiving and harmful.

From your granola bar, which is made with various kinds of sweeteners, to that zero-sugar beverage, which is still a little bit sugary. Reshmy Ranee, a dietitian, is here to help identify these food traps so you can stay away from them.

1Twenty80:

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CLAIMS CONSUMERS SHOULD BE WARY OF WHEN MAKING HEALTH-CONSCIOUS FOOD CHOICES?

Reshmy Ranee:

Here are some of the claims to be careful of:

- Claims that a particular food can cure diseases like cancer, osteoporosis and more.
- Claims that a particular food prevents diseases like heart attack and cancer from happening.

- Claims that the product is low in sugar but when checking the ingredients and nutrition labelling, the product is high in sugar.
- Claims that the food product is zero calorie. Check if the zero calorie is for per serving or for the whole packaging.

1Twenty80:

ARE PROTEIN SHAKES GOOD OR HARMFUL? WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF CONTENTS CONSUMERS SHOULD LOOK OUT FOR WHEN PURCHASING PROTEIN DRINKS OR BARS?

Reshmy:

Protein shakes are only for those who are into muscle building. Usually exercises that involve a lot of muscle movements like weight lifting can consume protein drinks and bars.

To make the taste of protein drinks and bars palatable, preservatives and sugar are added. Consumers should check the ingredients list and nutrition label before purchasing the protein shakes and bars. Excess sugar and protein consumption will usually lead to weight gain.

1Twenty80:

ENERGY DRINKS ARE OFTEN MARKETED AS A WAY TO BOOST ENERGY AND ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE. ARE ENERGY DRINKS REALLY HEALTHY? DO THEY CONTAIN ANY HARMFUL SUBSTANCES?

Reshmy:

Only if an athlete is involved in high intensity and prolonged activity like triathlon and marathons, should they drink energy drinks. For normal exercises like yoga, dance and jogging, energy drinks are not needed.

Energy drinks contain high levels of caffeine, sugar, and a variety of other legal stimulants such as guarana, taurine, and L-carnitine. The legal stimulants over a period of time can cause a raise in blood pressure and palpitation. If one already has these underlying health issues and continues taking stimulants, it may lead to heart attack.

> SHOULD PARENTS WANT TO GET CEREALS FOR THEIR KIDS, THEY SHOULD OPT FOR THE UNFLAVOURED OR NO COLOURING CEREALS.

1Twenty80:

MANY PARENTS SERVE THEIR CHILDREN CEREAL AS THE FIRST MEAL OF THE DAY. ARE CEREALS HEALTHY? ARE THERE ANY INGREDIENTS IN CEREALS THAT PARENTS OR CARETAKERS SHOULD BE AWARE OF?

Reshmy:

Cereals for breakfast are high in carbs, which provide the necessary fuel for the brain and activity of the child at school. Plus, kids should not skip breakfast as it has multiple benefits.

However, parents should be cautious about the amount of sugar in the cereals.

Should parents want to get cereals for their kids, they should opt for the unflavoured or no colouring cereals. Parents can then add on fresh fruits, nuts, seeds and milk to these cereals.

1Twenty80:

ARE GLUTEN-FREE FOODS HEALTHIER THAN GLUTEN-CONTAINING FOODS?

Reshmy:

Gluten is present in all wheat derivatives and one is not healthier than the other. However, if one has celiac diseases and to avoid flaring up of symptoms, the individual should consume gluten-free foods. Also, gluten-free foods are more expensive than gluten containing foods. Hence, not everyone in the population can afford them.

GLUTEN
FREE

1Twenty80:

ARE FLAVOURED YOGHURTS AS HEALTHY AS PLAIN YOGHURT?

Reshmy:

Flavoured yoghurts are high in added sugar and artificial flavouring. One cup of flavoured yoghurt as opposed to natural yoghurt has an additional 7g to 10g of sugar. Go for Greek yoghurt if you prefer a yoghurt with higher protein content as compared to plain yoghurt.

1Twenty80:

IS OPTING FOR ZERO SUGAR OR ZERO-CALORIE CARBONATED DRINKS HEALTHIER AS COMPARED TO ITS REGULAR COUNTERPART?

Reshmy:

In terms of sugar content, a zero calorie carbonated drink has no sugar as compared to regular carbonated drink.

However, some studies have noticed that a high consumption of zero calorie carbonated drinks caused an increase in obesity and Type 2 diabetes.

This is because artificial sweeteners are very sweet and can trigger an increased appetite by stimulating hunger hormones, altering sweet taste receptors, and triggering dopamine (happy hormones) responses in the brain. Also, given that diet soft drinks have no calories, these responses may cause a higher intake of sweet or calorie-dense foods, resulting in weight gain.

PLANT
BASED
MEAT

1Twenty80:

IS PLANT-BASED MEAT HEALTHIER AS COMPARED TO REAL MEAT?

Reshmy:

There are pros and cons in eating plant-based meat.

Eating more plant-based meat results in higher fibre intake and lower saturated fat consumption as compared to eating animal-based meat. Plant-based meats also have protein but the content is not as high as animal-based meats.

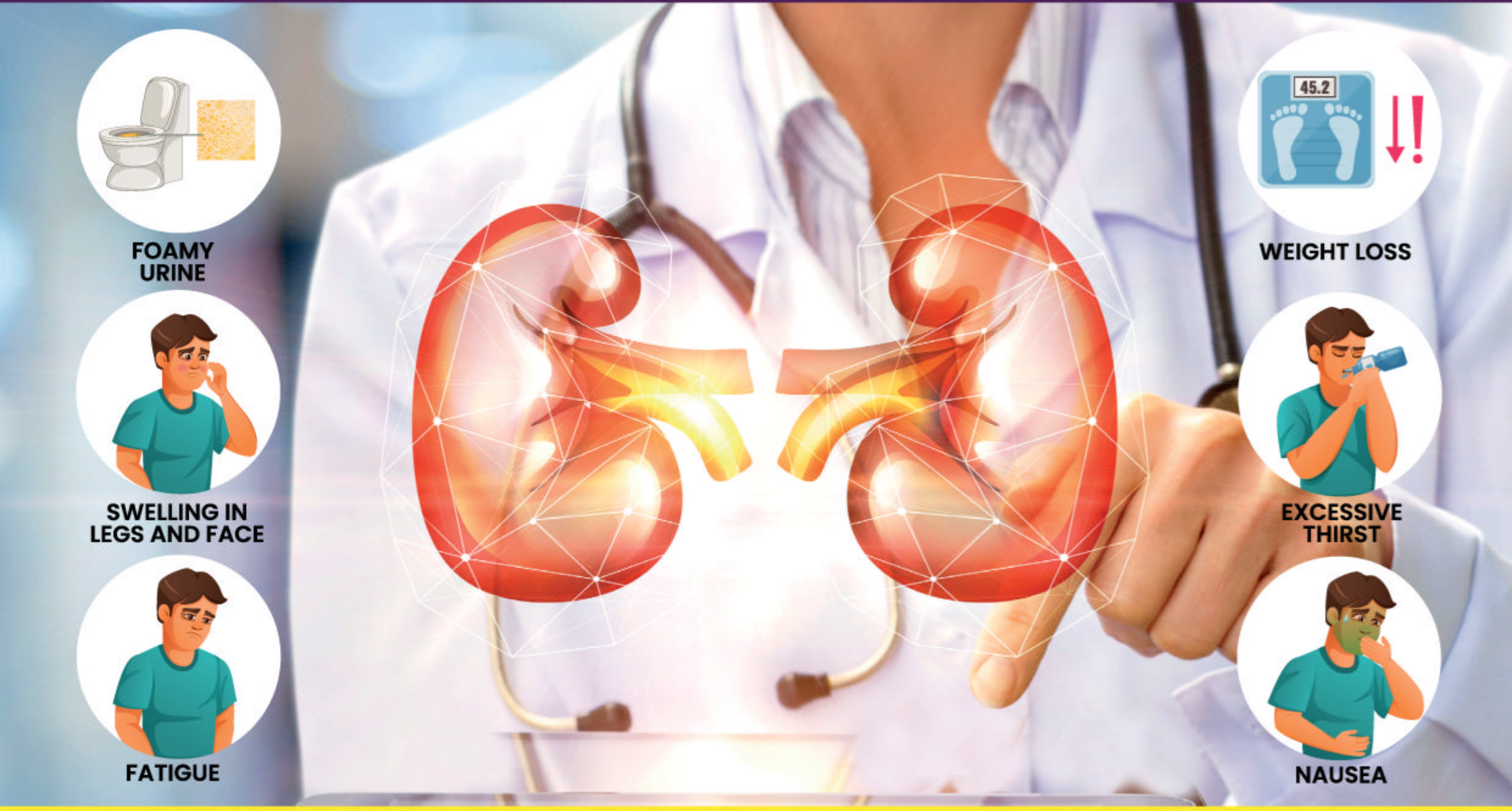
Hence, bodybuilders who need a high protein intake need to mix a variety of plant-based to meet their daily recommended amounts. They also may need to consume more plant-based meats to meet their protein requirement.

Nevertheless, the cons of plant-based meats are that they are highly processed and additives are added to enhance the taste.

LEVEL UP!

Advertising and food packaging have a big impact on our purchasing decisions. To avoid being duped by marketing claims, take your time to carefully read labels on the food you are consuming. ■

ARE YOU AT RISK FOR "SILENT KILLER" DISEASE?


FOAMY URINE
SWELLING IN LEGS AND FACE
FATIGUE
45.2
WEIGHT LOSS
EXCESSIVE THIRST
NAUSEA

Chronic kidney disease is a silent killer that affected 15.48% of the population in 2018 and it continues to be a public health concern in Malaysia.*

SYMPHONY NUTRACEUTICALS
CREATI NEXT
ADVANCED FORMULATION 200
A nutritional formula for stage 3 - stage 4 pre-dialysis patients
• High premium whey protein
• Improve nutritional well being
• Enhance physical strength
Special Nutritional Food
NON SOYA
PHYSICIAN CIRCULATION
NET WT. 33g x 15 sachets
NET WT. 33g

A Nutritional Formula for Stage 1 - Stage 4 Predialysis Patients

Stages of Chronic Kidney Disease		
Stage	**Description of kidney function**	**GFR**
1	Normal or high	≥ 90
2	Mildly decreased	60-89
3a	Mildly to moderately decreased	45-59
3b	Moderately to severely decreased	30-44
4	Severely decreased	15-29
5	Kidney failure	<15

(Source: Kidney Disease Improving Global Outcome)

Consult your doctor today to know more!

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*Chronic kidney disease taking a growing toll in Malaysia. www.thesundaily.my. (2022, March 10). Retrieved July 6, 2022, from https://www.thesundaily.my/local/chronic-kidney-disease-taking-a-growing-toll-in-malaysia-BK8936751

*(2020). KDIGO 2020 Clinical Practice Guideline for Diabetes Management in Chronic Kidney Disease. Kidney International, 98(4), S1–S115. doi:10.1016/j.kint.2020.06.019

*Saminathan, TA, Hooi, LS, Mohd Yusoff, M et al. 2020, 'Prevalence of chronic kidney disease and its associated factors in Malaysia; findings from a nationwide population-based cross-sectional study', BMC Nephrol 21, 344.

For more enquiries please contact +603 7612 5476

SYMPHONY NUTRACEUTICALS

YOUR GUIDE TO INDIGESTION

Say *Adios* to upset stomach

By Yasanthi Devi

Indigestion is a term used to describe a variety of digestive symptoms. Each person may experience different indigestion symptoms, such as nausea, belching, pain or heartburn, making each situation unique.

There are several factors that can contribute to indigestion, as well as several treatment options. We reached out to Director and Pharmacist at City Wellness Pharmacy, Gina Koay Wan Lee, to get her perspective on this common ailment that affects many people.

1Twenty80:

WHAT CAUSES INDIGESTION?

Gina Koay:

Indigestion may be caused by disorders of the gastrointestinal tract. For example, Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), gastritis, peptic ulcer disease, irritable bowel syndrome or cancer. Certain medications such as aspirin, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS), and certain antibiotics may aggravate the gastrointestinal tract and lead to indigestion.

1Twenty80:

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF INDIGESTION?

Gina:

Indigestion, also called dyspepsia, is a feeling of having an upset stomach. It is described as having a pain in the stomach or upper abdomen. Indigestion describes certain symptoms, such as feeling fullness soon after eating, nausea, vomiting or belching.

1Twenty80:

IS BLOATING THE SAME AS INDIGESTION?

Gina:

Indigestion also refers to the feeling of discomfort or pain that occurs in the upper abdomen, often after eating or drinking.
It is not a disease but a symptom. Indigestion is a common problem, affecting up to 30 percent of the population. Common symptoms include bloating, discomfort, feeling too full, nausea and gas.

1Twenty80:

HOW CAN ONE TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HEARTBURN AND INDIGESTION?

Gina:

You may be able to tell the difference between heartburn and indigestion based on the location of your symptoms. indigestion commonly affects the abdominal area, but heartburn symptoms can be felt in the chest and oesophageal areas.

1Twenty80:

WHO IS AT A GREATER RISK FOR INDIGESTION?

Gina:

If a person is eating too much or eating too fast, drinking too much alcohol, smoking cigarettes, or having too much stress, they may have an upset stomach too. These are the factors leading to indigestion or dyspepsia.

1Twenty80:

WHICH SUPPLEMENTS CAN HELP WITH INDIGESTION?

Gina:

Supplements which can help with digestion include:

➲ PROBIOTICS

Probiotics contain living organisms, mainly bacteria and yeast. These resemble good bacteria in the gut that help with digestion. The supplements are used to treat certain gastrointestinal (GI) problems and for general digestive health.

i➲ ARTICHOKE

Artichoke leaf extract may relieve symptoms of indigestion. When used daily, the extract seems to lessen nausea, vomiting, gas, and abdominal pain. It also might help treat Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) and reduce cramps and abdominal pain.

➲ GINGER

Asian medicine uses ginger to treat stomach discomfort. In the West, ginger is used to relieve nausea and vomiting during pregnancy. Ginger is available as a powder, in capsules or tablets, or as freshly cut root.

➲ DIGESTIVE ENZYMES

Digestive enzymes in oral tablet form such as amylase, lipase, and protease may be given in cases where deficiency of these enzymes contribute to functional dyspepsia.

1Twenty80:

CAN INDIGESTION BE TREATED AT HOME?

Gina:

You can certainly treat mild indigestion at home by practising self-care. Get some antacids on standby in your medicine cabinets. Antacids are basic compounds which neutralise hydrochloric acid in the gastric secretions, and help to reduce the adverse gastrointestinal effects.

1Twenty80:

IS INDIGESTION PREVENTABLE? IF SO, WHAT ARE SOME OF THE PREVENTION STEPS?

Gina:

Yes, indigestion is preventable. Try to modify eating habits such as chewing your food slowly and completely, have a calm environment during mealtimes, and do not eat straight after your exercise. You are also advised to avoid food that may cause stomach issues. Some of these foods include carbonated drinks, caffeinated beverages, fatty or spicy food.

1Twenty80:

IF AN INDIVIDUAL IS EXPERIENCING RECURRING INDIGESTION, WHOM SHOULD THEY SEEK PROFESSIONAL ADVICE FROM?

Gina:

You can certainly seek advice from the community pharmacist first to rule out any possible serious underlying issues. The pharmacist will then suggest the right medicines for your indigestion issues, and refer to doctors when the condition warrants a more thorough check-up.

> YES, INDIGESTION IS PREVENTABLE. TRY TO MODIFY EATING HABITS SUCH AS CHEWING YOUR FOOD SLOWLY AND COMPLETELY, HAVE A CALM ENVIRONMENT DURING MEALTIMES, AND DO NOT EAT STRAIGHT AFTER YOUR EXERCISE.

1Twenty80:

WHAT LIFESTYLE CHANGES CAN ONE MAKE TO LESSEN THE LIKELIHOOD OF EXPERIENCING INDIGESTION?

Gina:

Maintaining a healthy weight is always good as extra weights will certainly put pressure on your abdomen, which may lead to reflux or gastric issues. You're also suggested to eat smaller but more frequent meals. Do not eat a meal 2 to 3 hours before going to bed. Try to manage your daily stress levels effectively as stress is one of the contributing factors which may aggravate indigestion.

As 2022 comes to a close and many are seizing this opportunity to gather and celebrate. In the spirit of celebration, we come together over food. Hence, let's make healthier choices so that indigestion and gastro-intestinal issues don't ruin our festive mood.

FOODS THAT CAN CAUSE INDIGESTION

#1 FATTY FOODS

Foods that are high in fat such as greasy foods may cause heartburn. Popular crowd favourites such as pizza and french fries are thought to be some of the culprits behind indigestion.

#2 CITRUS JUICES

Citrus juices may potentially trigger acid reflux or heartburn. These citrus juices originate from our everyday household items such as orange juice or grape juice. People with GERD may experience difficulties when consuming citrus juices.

#3 SPICY FOODS

Spicy foods are commonly known to cause heartburns. However, the exact correlation between spice and heartburn remains a mystery. Experts believe that spicy foods can also irritate an already inflamed oesophagus. This in turn can further exacerbate heart burns.

#4 CAFFEINATED BEVERAGES

Coffee amongst other caffeinated beverages are thought to further worsen heartburn symptoms due to its ability to stimulate gastric acid secretion. However, the link between coffee intake and heartburn still is inconclusive. ■

Source: Healthline

The Palate of the Mediterranean Sea

A comprehensive look at the wholesome Mediterranean diet

By Isabel Andrew

The Mediterranean Sea is surrounded by 22 magnificent countries. Home to about 480 million people across three continents (Africa, Asia and Europe), let's talk about how they eat!

The generic term for their traditional eating habit is the "Mediterranean diet". Its nuanced cultures, ethnicities, agricultural productions and more have blessed us with varying versions of the diet. As such, it has numerous health benefits with a fun twist.

THE GIST

Generally, there are no strict rules or regulations for the diet, nevertheless, two things must be made clear.
This diet says:

- **YES** to fruits, vegetables, legumes, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and heart-healthy fats.
- **NO** to processed foods, added sugar, and refined grain.

Wondering about alcohol?

Mediterranean natives include wine in moderation as wine can reduce the risk of heart disease and more. As mentioned, the diverse geographical locations practice differing patterns of the diet. So a loose guide would be to prioritise minimally processed, plant-based foods. Fish and poultry are more commonly eaten than red meat and fruits are desired desserts instead of sweets.

THE HEALTH ASPECT

There must be a reason why the Mediterranean is known for its healthy population. How do plant-based foods aid our bodies and minds? Here are not one or two, but seven reasons for the robustness of this diet.

#1 Promotes heart health

One research studied the effects of the Mediterranean diet and a low-fat diet and its results showed that the Mediterranean diet can slow down the buildup of plaques in the arteries. Heart disease like atherosclerosis can occur when plaque collects, thickens, hardens and blocks blood flow in the arteries of the heart. Other cardiovascular issues like stroke, heart attack, and death can be dealt with in the Mediterranean way.

#2 Supports healthy blood sugar levels

Studies also show the Mediterranean diet stabilises levels of diastolic and systolic blood pressure. Systolic blood pressure measures the pressure in our arteries when our heart beats while diastolic blood pressure measures the pressure in our arteries when our heart rests between beats. It can also decrease insulin resistance, a condition that impairs the body's ability to use insulin to regulate blood sugar levels effectively.

#3 Protects brain function

A diet that focuses on nuts and legumes is sure to favour sturdy brain health. The Mediterranean diet has proved to battle cognitive decline and improve memory, attention, and processing speed in the elderly. Thus, reducing the risks of developing Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia.

#4 Relieving depression

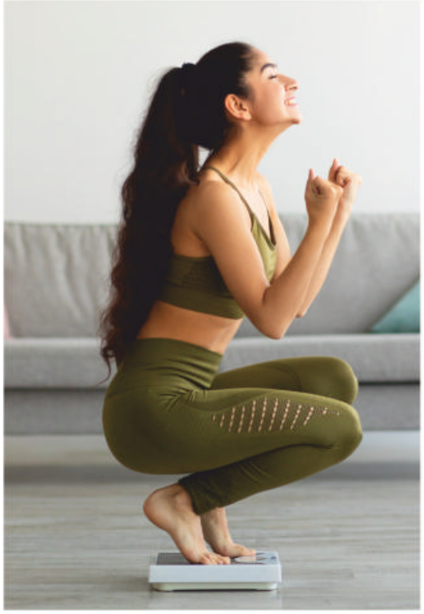
Consuming more raw fruit and veggies through this diet has displayed fewer symptoms of depression. The Mediterranean eating style can lift moods and ensure stronger mental health. So, if you wish for a gleeful morning, munch on a handful of chia seeds and slurp up some yoghurt!

#5 Improving sleep quality

Researchers have explored the wonderful effects of this diet on our sleep too. Older adults have seen improvement in their sleep quality as opposed to younger people.

#6 Help with weight loss

The Mediterranean diet wasn't meant to be a weight loss plan. It just happens to be one of the renowned healthy diets. Research groups have shown that adhering to the diet can help lose weight. Nonetheless, it's important to understand that weight loss is subjective and must be accompanied by exercise and lifestyle changes.



#7 Decreased risks of cancers

The Mediterranean diet has shown positive results when it comes to lowering the chances of falling prey to breast cancer, colon cancer, prostate cancer and some head and neck cancers. However, more studies are underway in testing and proving this theory.

HOW TO FOLLOW IT

Now that we have established that a Mediterranean diet is no doubt one of the healthiest ways to eat, let's dive into stirring up some dishes to fill the table and our stomachs!

Ideally, your Mediterranean-style fridge should look like this:

- **Enjoy:** Vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds, legumes, potatoes, whole grains, herbs, spices, fish, seafood, and extra virgin olive oil.

- **Eat in moderation:** Poultry, eggs, cheese, and yoghurt.

- **Eat rarely:** Red meat, sugar-sweetened beverages, added sugars, processed meat, refined grains, refined oils, and other highly processed foods.

Avoid stocking up your food stash with these:

- **Added sugar:** Added sugar is found in many foods but is especially high in soda, candies, ice cream, table sugar, syrup, and baked goods.

- **Refined grains:** White bread, pasta, tortillas, chips, crackers.
- **Trans fats:** Found in margarine, fried foods, and other processed foods.

- **Refined oils:** Soybean oil, canola oil, cottonseed oil, grapeseed oil.
- **Processed meat:** Processed sausages, hot dogs, deli meats, beef jerky.
- **Highly processed foods:** Fast food, convenience meals, microwave popcorn, granola bars.

Planning on grocery shopping? Lookout for these items:

- **Vegetables:** Carrots, onions, broccoli, spinach, kale, garlic, zucchini, mushrooms.
- **Frozen veggies:** Peas, carrots, broccoli, mixed vegetables.
- **Tubers:** Potatoes, sweet potatoes, yams.

- **Fruits:** Apples, bananas, oranges, grapes, melons, peaches, pears, strawberries, blueberries.

- **Grains:** Whole grain bread, whole grain pasta, quinoa, brown rice, oats.
- **Legumes:** Lentils, chickpeas, black beans, kidney beans.
- **Nuts:** Almonds, walnuts, cashews, pistachios, macadamia nuts.
- **Seeds:** Sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, chia seeds, hemp seeds.

- **Condiments:** Sea salt, pepper, turmeric, cinnamon, cayenne pepper, oregano.

- **Seafood:** Salmon, sardines, mackerel, trout, shrimp, mussels.

- **Dairy products:** Greek yoghurt, yoghurt, milk.

- **Poultry:** Chicken, duck, turkey.
- **Eggs:** Chicken, quail, and duck eggs.

- **Healthy fats:** Extra virgin olive oil, olives, avocados, avocado oil.

EATING HEALTHY SHOULDN'T BE BORING AND THE MEDITERREANEANS ARE TAKING US DOWN THAT FUN PATH.

Look no further for a week's menu:

Monday

BREAKFAST: Greek yogurt with strawberries and chia seeds
LUNCH: A whole grain sandwich with hummus and vegetables
DINNER: A tuna salad with greens and olive oil, as well as a fruit salad

Tuesday

BREAKFAST: Oatmeal with blueberries
LUNCH: Caprese zucchini noodles with mozzarella, cherry tomatoes, olive oil, and balsamic vinegar
DINNER: A salad with tomatoes, olives, cucumbers, farro, grilled chicken, and feta cheese

Wednesday

BREAKFAST: An omelette with mushrooms, tomatoes, and onions
LUNCH: A whole grain sandwich with cheese and fresh vegetables
DINNER: Mediterranean lasagna

Thursday

BREAKFAST: Yoghurt with sliced fruit and nuts
LUNCH: A quinoa salad with chickpeas
DINNER: Broiled salmon with brown rice and vegetables

Friday

BREAKFAST: Eggs and sautéed vegetables with whole wheat toast
LUNCH: Stuffed zucchini boats with pesto, turkey sausage, tomatoes, bell peppers, and cheese
DINNER: Grilled lamb with salad and baked potato

Saturday

BREAKFAST: Oatmeal with raisins, nuts, and apple slices
LUNCH: A whole grain sandwich with vegetables
DINNER: Mediterranean pizza made with whole wheat pita bread and topped with cheese, vegetables, and olives

Sunday

BREAKFAST: An omelette with veggies and olives
LUNCH: Falafel bowl with feta, onions, tomatoes, hummus, and rice
DINNER: Grilled chicken with vegetables, sweet potato fries, and fresh fruit

Eating healthy shouldn't be boring and the Mediterreaneans are taking us down that fun path. Talk to your dietitian about incorporating these foods for a satisfying dietary plan. *Bon appétit!* ■

Sources: Mayo Clinic, Healthline, Medical News Today, Everyday Health, Johns Hopkins Hospital, American Heart Association

Belly binding, the Malaysian way

Unwrapping this local not-so-secret practice

By Isabel Andrew

Ladies, if you're hoping to shed some weight with an abdominal wrap, think again.

If you're a new mom who is hoping to regain your pre-pregnancy body almost immediately, stop right there.

Take a deep breath.

Some of you might not know everything there is to enveloping your tummy for weight loss. Want to know more about belly binding? Here's your guide to the Malaysian style.

Belly binding

Bengkung or waist girdle is a tradition that originates in Malaysia. New mothers would bind their bellies using a long cloth from under the chest to below the hips for about 44 days post-natal. The custom began with princesses generations ago and is still practised in the countryside. Nowadays there's a growing resurgence among urban dwellers too, with more modern options such as belly binders using velcro or plastic clips to fasten the binder easily.

Though, do be careful. Modern options usually have boning which can dig into the skin and cause pain as you move about. Plus, unlike the traditional *bengkung*, most of them only bind the stomach area only. Hence, pushing down on the pelvic floor muscles and organs, potentially worsening the lower body.

How does it help?

Bengkung belly binding helps to:

- Hold the muscles together and speed up closure to prevent diastasis recti.
- Relieve pain and get you moving.
- Increase blood flow.
- Lowers swelling from surgery.
- Better posture for breastfeeding.
- Support your back and pelvic floor.

It's important to remember that belly binding will not give you an hourglass figure as it's not waist training but merely a supportive device for the abdomen.

Our bodies transform almost daily. Keep in mind that your body's primary goal is to sustain a healthy you. Belly binding can be beneficial but do discuss this with your doctor to ensure that it's safe for you to bind your belly.

Sources: Healthline, WebMD, Medical News Today

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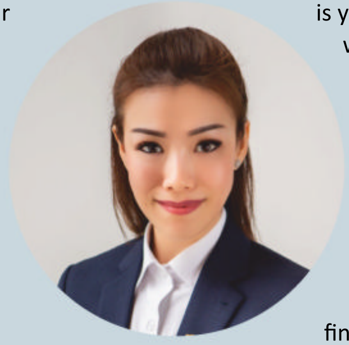
FINANCIAL BLUNDERS YOU'LL WANT TO STOP MAKING

Common money mistakes and their solutions

By Isabel Andrew

Money is the emerald gold we have been running and chasing after for generations. To this day, the challenge remains a top-tier world crisis. Do you feel the same way about your finance? Fret not, for superwoman Lam Pui Ka is here! As a Million Dollar Wealth Planner and Top of The Table MDRT Member in Prudential, here's what she has to say about managing your financial health.



HOW IMPORTANT IS FINANCIAL HEALTH?

Investopedia defines financial health as the state of one's personal monetary affairs. Your savings, retirement funds and expenditure are all various facets of financial health. It basically covers all aspects of money in your life. So it's obviously paramount to manage, but how important is it?

Lam Pui Ka says "The most important is your health, not your wealth. Are you sure you are financially healthy for when a catastrophe hits you? Many are medically 'cured', but financially 'dead'. Your medical or physical health can be protected by an insurance medical card, but not your finance. Thus, the importance of financial health."

HOW HAS DIGITAL FINANCE SECURITY EVOLVED?

"The pandemic saw the peak of finance in its digital realm. Almost everyone and everything transcended into portals, apps and social media platforms. In my line of work, we were dealing with numerous e-submissions", recalls Lam.

Technology has revolutionised the way the finance industry works. We don't need to drive to a physical bank to check balances, bank apps on our phones can show us that. Receipts and taxes don't need to wait days, automation online does the trick. Cryptocurrencies and monetary transactions are more smooth and quicker, changing the form of money. Though, are all these safe?

WHAT ARE SOME COMMON MONEY MISTAKES IN TODAY'S DIGITAL ERA?

We can all name at least three common money mistakes off the top of our heads. Falling for scams, unnecessary spending, and collecting debts aren't surprising news nowadays.

Lam remarks, “Shopping is a huge scam. Many become enslaved to the promises of fraudsters who act as middlemen in online purchases. They often pose as banks and sellers, contacting victims and asking to verify personal details. And before you know it, you’ve been swindled by hundreds to thousands. This is a common sight in e-commerce platforms, especially during sales and discount seasons. Unfortunately, a number of senior citizens are duped for their life savings.”

“A growing trend, that I too advise my clients to look into is to diversify their savings from the bank into a savings account with their insurance. Besides insurance, they are other options like stocks too. Security is subjective. Thus, it’s recommended to secure your finances with human walls, algorithms that require you to type in SMS TAC (Transaction Activation Code) before each login, biometric authentication asking for your fingerprint or face id and more. Yes, access to money won’t be so convenient, but isn't that better?”

DEBT
DEBT
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DEBT

> BE INFORMED. KNOW YOUR FACTS. THERE ARE LAWS REGULATING BANKS, INSURANCE COMPANIES, STOCK MARKETS AND OTHER FINANCIAL GIANTS. READ UP BEFORE TAKING THE LEAP.

HOW CAN ONE AVOID FALLING INTO FINANCIAL TRAPS?

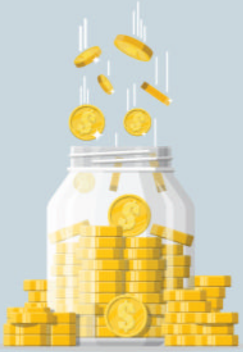
Lam simplifies it saying, “Be informed. Know your facts. There are laws regulating banks, insurance companies, stock markets and other financial giants. Read up before taking the leap.”

However, it’s easier said than done, isn’t it? Here are some tips to keep in mind:

- Make a budget.
- Lower expenses.
- Pay in cash.
- Stop taking on debt.
- Meet with a certified financial advisor.
- Be realistic when resolving financial problems.

HOW CAN ONE SHIFT TO A HEALTHIER MINDSET WHEN IT COMES TO FINANCING?

Lam busts a myth you have probably repeated too many times, “One healthy financial mindset to adopt is with saving and spending. The recurring mantra is ‘Spend wisely, Save the rest’. But that shouldn't be the way. Moving forward, I encourage you to ‘Save first, then spend. When you received your paycheck, set aside 20%. This habit will ensure that you have liquidity in store for emergencies. You’ll also be able to track your expenditure more accurately. Later on, you can choose to save more and spend less!”



HOW CAN STUDENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPROVE THEIR FINANCIAL LITERACY?

Ever since the digitalisation of money, everyone has access! With that being said, schools and universities are now approaching various methods of digital finance. One way is by providing student cards that can hold their basic information, cash and even qualify for student prices and discounts.

Hence it's vital that students and young people be financially literate. Lam this to say to students, "If you are a fresh graduate, get a medical card ASAP! This way your medical expenses wouldn't be a burden to your parents. If you're working or just got yourself an increment, congratulations! Go save up and learn to be financially independent. Young people can learn discipline, patience and prudence via money management."

When it comes to when one should start saving, Lam has only one word for you, "Now."

HEALTH INSURANCE

WHAT ARE SOME POPULAR MYTHS SURROUNDING FINANCE?

Lam reiterates a vital lesson with money management, "Think short. People make a terrible mistake when they say the future is 5 years or 10 years to come. No! The future is tomorrow. In fact, it's this very next minute."

"Covid-19 has taught us that our physical and financial are equally important. My favourite thing to say is 'Don't be medically cured and financially dead. Be alive both ways.' if you have a family to look after, the responsibility is yours. Do you want to leave your family with your asset or liabilities? "

> COVID-19 HAS TAUGHT US THAT OUR PHYSICAL AND FINANCIAL ARE EQUALLY IMPORTANT. MY FAVOURITE THING TO SAY IS 'DON'T BE MEDICALLY CURED AND FINANCIALLY DEAD. BE ALIVE BOTH WAYS.' IF YOU HAVE A FAMILY TO LOOK AFTER, THE RESPONSIBILITY IS YOURS.

'SIDE HUSTLES' HAVE BECOME A TREND AMONG THOSE WHO WISH TO BE FINANCIALLY INDEPENDENT. HOW SHOULD ONE APPROACH THIS MARKET?

Young money minds, this one's for you!

The new generation has redefined work just by sitting at home passive incomes and side hustles are the smart way to earn a glorious number on a check. Lam encourages you to give it a try as long as you do this, "Looking at this trend, I'm glad many people are turning to financial literacy. Here's my tip: Convert your variable income to guarantee income."

"This means if you're an employee and you depend on the supply and demand market, you can try out bonds or stocks. However, always seek guidance from financial advisors before making a decision.

So still think finance is hard? It's surely not a walk in the park but that doesn't mean your walk into a bank should be a daunting one. We hope our interview with Lam has shone some light on the most coveted answers to your financial anxieties. ■

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YOUR GUIDE TO Fennel Seeds

What else can these seeds do?

By Isabel Andrew

If you've just started cooking, fennel seeds can be a pain in the neck right? We're guessing it's because of its confusing name. In Malaysia, the similar Malay names of fennel seeds (*jintan manis*) and cumin (*jintan putih*) can cause a conundrum of flavours. Read on as we dig deep into the liquorice-like flavoured seeds and their sweet perks!

#1 THEY LOVE YOUR HEART

Fennel seeds are packed with fibre, magnesium, potassium, and calcium. These nutrients are great at reducing the risk factors of heart disease like high cholesterol and high blood pressure.

#2 BREASTFEEDING WOMEN ARE IN LUCK

Fennel seeds have shown extraordinary galactogenic properties. This basically refers to the ability of fennel seeds to increase milk secretion and blood levels of the prolactin hormone. This hormone signals mothers' bodies to produce more breast milk when needed. However, side effects like difficulty in feeding have been reported. Thus, it's important to consult your doctor before trying this out.

#3 RELIEVE MENOPAUSE SYMPTOMS

A reliever of menopausal symptoms. Studies have noted that fennel seeds can improve sexual function and satisfaction in menopausal women. It may also be able to reduce hot flushes, vaginal itching, dryness, and sleep disturbances.

You can enjoy the benefits of fennel seeds with a simple cuppa in the morning or evening daily. Here are some simple steps to prepare fennel tea:

1. Boil some water in a pot and add crushed fennel seeds and ginger.
2. Strain the tea into a cup, and add a touch of honey and mint leaves.
3. Mix them well and enjoy your soothing beverage.

Fennel seeds are a great crunchy feed. You can devour them raw and cooked, day or night. Nevertheless, there are some safety concerns that you need to be aware of. Thus, consult your healthcare provider for more insights on how to reap these amazing seeds.

Sources: Healthline, WebMD, Medical News Today, Eating Well, Health Shots

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5 Crystal Clear Aquatic Destinations

A beautiful mix of wanderlust and aquatic hues

By Yasanthi Devi

Nations across the world are gradually welcoming travellers into its borders and many are seizing this opportunity to visit turquoise beaches and crystal clear waters for some much-needed reprieve.

Blue is the most popular colour in the world, so it's no surprise that people flock to water-centric destinations to relax next to clear blue water, with a cold drink in hand and a gentle breeze lulling them to sleep!

If you're in the midst of figuring out your next travel destination, why not consider visiting these crystal clear ones?

#1 THE MALDIVES

The Maldives is a nation consisting of islands that are situated in the Indian Ocean. There are currently 1192 islands spanning a distance of 871 kilometres. The country's unique geography frequently enchants visitors with its colourful reefs, soft white sands, and vibrant species of fish protected by the reefs.

Maldives islands are also home to endangered marine life such as manta rays and whale sharks. The Maldives' crystal clear water is popular among snorkelers, divers, and avid social media influencers and travellers.

For a sunny side of life, Maldives may just hold the answer!

#2 PALAWAN, PHILIPPINES

Palawan is a Philippine archipelago province. Beautiful fishing villages, exotic wildlife, and numerous UNESCO World Heritage Sites can all be found in Palawan. It also has one of the best dive sites in the world, primarily on Coron Island. Divers can see Japanese shipwrecks in Coron Island, which are significant historical remnants.

Foodies will also have the time of their lives in Palawan as there are plenty of eateries that offer local delicacies and iconic Philippine cuisines.

Looking for a slice of heaven? Palawan is your go to destination.

Image Credit: R.M. Nunes / Shutterstock.com

#3 THE EXUMA, BAHAMAS

The Exumas are a chain of 365 islands divided into three regions. Visitors can snorkel or lounge on various islands in Great Exuma, Little Exuma, and The Exuma Cays.

One unexpected feature that no tourist will expect to find in the Bahamas is the opportunity for swimmers and divers to swim with pigs in Big Major Cay. Yes, you read that correctly! Locals believe the pigs were abandoned by sailors who intended to return and eat them. While some speculate that the pigs may have swum from a nearby shipwreck, others believe otherwise.

If you're looking for a one-of-a-kind experience in the Bahamas, your calling may just be found here.

#4 PLITVICE LAKES NATIONAL PARK, CROATIA

The park is mostly covered in forest vegetation, with grasslands being a smaller part of it. The lakes, the park's most appealing feature, account for just under 1% of the total park area.

16 named lakes and a number of smaller, unnamed ones make up the lake system, which cascades into one another. Some parts of this vast lake system are joined by waterfalls that flow into a limestone canyon. The water can be seen by visitors from the walkways and hiking trails.

The park is open to the public all year. It's also worth noting that, while these lakes are stunning in their sapphire glory, visitors are not permitted to swim in them.

#5 PEYTO LAKE, ALBERTA, CANADA

Peyto Lake, a glacier-fed lake located approximately 40 kilometres north of Lake Louise in Banff National Park, is known for its signature bright blue body of water. The blue body of water's secret is glacier rock flour, which flows into these waters during the summer.

The scenic backdrop of Peyto Lake, which blends seamlessly with clear blue waters, is a hotspot for photographers looking for that perfect Instagram-worthy shot. In addition to being a photographer's dream location, aspiring hikers can have a great time here because the terrain is beginner friendly and the moderate elevation provides a decent hike.

Have fun at Peyto Lake!

NOTE FOR TRAVELLERS: Please be careful when swimming in the ocean. If you're new to the terrains that you're visiting, ensure that there's a professional accompanying you for a safe and smooth travel experience. ■

Source: Official website of Plitvice Lakes National Park, Bahamas Tourism, Visit Maldives, Travel Alberta, Trip Advisor

Plant-based Diet:

Good or Bad?

The choice is in your hands

By Yasanthi Devi

The thing about a plant-based diet...

It focuses primarily on foods that are derived from plants. The common misconception about plant-based diet is that it exclusively focuses on fruits and vegetables only. However, a plant-based diet also includes nuts, seeds, legumes, beans, and whole grains.

Another common misconception associated with people who eat a plant-based diet is that they are vegetarians or vegans or do not eat meat or dairy products. However, this is not entirely true. People who choose a plant-based diet are essentially choosing to eat more plant-based foods. In other words: In addition to vegans and vegetarians, people on a normal diet can also include more plant-based foods in their diets.

There is also an area in the plant-based community where adherents are opting for more whole foods as opposed to processed foods in their daily lives. By and large, the term "plant-based diet" is interpreted and applied differently by different people.

Go green or go home

Plant-based diets are becoming increasingly popular around the world, and there's a good reason for that. People consider it a healthier form of diet as compared to their normal daily diet. If you're looking to make the switch or are still on the fence about going plant-based, you've come to the right place! We hear you and we want to help!

With that in mind, here are some pros and cons of a plant-based diet.

PLANT-BASED DIETS ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY POPULAR AROUND THE WORLD, AND THERE'S A GOOD REASON FOR THAT. PEOPLE CONSIDER IT A HEALTHIER FORM OF DIET AS COMPARED TO THEIR NORMAL DAILY DIET.

The good stuff

Plant-based diet may make you feel full longer

Since plant-based food is mostly derived from vegetables, it's also high in fiber and complex carbohydrates. This can help your tummy feel good. If you're keen on incorporating more fresh vegetables and fruits in your diet, the water content from them can help you feel a little longer.

Here's a pro tip! When including vegetables in your meal, choose a variety of vegetables that come in different colours. This tempts your sight as well as your palate!

Plant-based diets are often rich in phytonutrients

The natural chemicals or substances that plants produce are known as phytonutrients. This naturally occurring compound helps protect plants from insects and the sun. Phytonutrients are not only beneficial for plants, but it also benefits overall human health.

Phytonutrients are found to contain antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties that can aid in good health management. Antioxidants are important to reduce oxidative stress in the body. Whereas, anti-inflammatory properties help with blocking certain body chemicals that may cause inflammation.

Phytonutrients can be found in:

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Beans
- Nuts

Plant-based diets come in various shapes and sizes

Opting for a plant-based diet gives you the liberty to decide the extent of how much plant-based food you're going to include in your diet. You have the freedom to choose what works best for you. You can even supplement your plant-based meal with a small serving of meat protein if you wish.

However, to take full advantage of the uniqueness of the plant-based diet, choose proportionally more plant-based foods. Think plant-based!

The flip side

Plant-based products can be expensive

This is especially true for the category of mock meat. A good example in this context would be a price comparison between a plant-based burger patty and a meat or chicken burger patty. The price difference between these two products is significant, with the plant-based patty being more expensive.

From an economic point of view, this happens because meatless alternatives are made at a much smaller scale as compared to the mass production of meat-based patties.

You may not be meeting adequate needs for proteins and other nutrients

Protein is important to help maintain muscle mass, bone strength, and skin health. Most of the time, we tend to get these important proteins and other nutrients from meat or meat-based products.

Some people who follow a plant-based diet tend to skip animal-derived products altogether and these include milk, cheese, and butter. Milk has important elements such as calcium, protein, fat, and other essential nutrients.

To avoid potential nutrition deficiency, it's important for you to plan out your plant-based diet. The good thing is, proteins and other important nutrients can also be found in meatless alternatives such as soy products, beans, lentils, plant-based milk, and more!

You've reached the end of the article. Are you still on the fence about a plant-based diet? ■

Source: Healthline, WebMD, Harvard Health, Medical News Today, Cleveland Clinic

SMOOTHIE POWER

Start your day with these nutritious smoothies!

By Edeline Anne Goh

Banana boost

Magic mango

Smoothies make the perfect solution to fill your growling tummy especially when you're in a rush. All you'll need to do is to blend the ingredients and *voila*! You have a meal!

The best part about smoothies is that you're able to add and switch ingredients according to your dietary requirements or cravings. Plus, if you were to use locally-grown fruits, this makes your smoothie a pocket-friendly meal option and it's cost is usually a portion of the price you would pay from a restaurant or juice bar. Try these nutritious smoothies this New Year and have a great start to January!

BANANA BOOST

INGREDIENTS

1	Large banana
2 tbsp	Smooth sugar-free and salt-free peanut butter
200 ml	Fresh milk
1 tbsp	Rolled oats

A pinch of cinnamon

METHOD

1. In a blender, blend all ingredients until smooth and enjoy immediately.

MAGIC MANGO

INGREDIENTS

100 g	Mango, cubed
100 ml	Fresh milk
2 tbsp	Greek yoghurt
1 tbsp	Chia seeds

METHOD

1. In a blender, blend all ingredients until smooth and enjoy immediately.

TIP: A milk substitute may be used if you're lactose intolerant or prefer any type of plant-based milk. ■

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